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BY R. SCOTT MOXLEY

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JOHN GILHOOLEY

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"Joel Beers clearly does not possess the cultural sensitivity or journalistic prowess to handle any sort of discussion of inclusion of any sort. Quite frankly, he's not that good of a writer. Is this a paid position, or is he volunteering his time? If he's being paid, I would suggest hiring another writer with more experience or better samples."
—Lisa Timmons, commenting on Joel Beers' "No MSG Added: Part Asian, Part American, All Funny" (May 23)

Joel Beers responds: This crower can zip it about my writing ability, and I will not weigh in on her reading ability. This comedy troupe bills itself as Asian American, MSG is in their title, and they are advertising the show with "If you don't laugh in the first 15 minutes, you get a potsticker." It is not like I channeled Clint Eastwood in *Gran Torino*.

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Out of the Cell, Into the Blaze

Board of Supervisors vote to send OC inmates to Fire Camp

BY ANTHONY PIGNATARO

Wildfires are the new norm in California. As climate change has progressed over the past century, our state has gotten hotter and drier, and that translates into a lot of dead trees and chaparral to burn. In fact, all but five of the state's 20 largest wildfires in recorded history have taken place since 2000, *National Geographic* reported in November.

Fighting these fires requires thousands of people. And that means state officials have increasingly looked to prison inmates for help. In 2017, 1,500 of the 11,000 personnel battling wildfires in California were inmates. One year later, that number had more than doubled to 3,900.

Since 2015, inmates from Orange County have participated in the state's Fire Camp Program, though just five are doing so right now, according to a California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) spokesperson. That number may go up soon, on May 21, the Orange County Board of Supervisors renewed its participation in the program, which now allows for 100 county inmates to be housed at the CDCR Fire Camp training facility and 100 inmates at Fire Camps at any given time.

The reason counties started sending inmates to fire crews dates back to 2011, when the Public Safety Realignment Act allowed for inmates convicted of nonviolent, non-sexual offenses to serve their sentences in county jails rather than state prisons. In 2014, Proposition 47 reclassified various drug and property crimes from felonies to misdemeanors, which decreased prison populations statewide.

"California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has found it increasingly difficult to supply qualified inmates to support the needs of the California State Fire Camps," states a County of Orange staff report on the new agreement.

In other words, CDCR needs cheap firefighters, and OC is offering them. "The Sheriff-Coroner Department (Sheriff) has determined that sending qualified inmates to CDCR for the purpose of working the Fire Camp Program is beneficial to Sheriff by assisting in alleviating inmate-population concerns," according to the county staff report. "In addition, these camps benefit the public at large, in that the inmates assigned to work the Fire Camps also provide assistance with community-service projects. Projects include clearing firebreaks, public-road maintenance, restoring historical structures, park maintenance, sand bagging and flood protection, and clearing fallen trees and debris."

Photographer Brian Frank spent time with inmate firefighters during the 2017 wildfires in Northern California. "They work just as hard as any hand crew doing the dirtiest, hardest part of firefighting," he said in an Oct. 23, 2017, photo essay for the Marshall Project. "They do the brutal, backbreaking part of digging fire lines and clearing fuel out of the path of a fire—the thankless work."

It's also dangerous. Since 1983, six inmates have died while fighting wildfires in California. Inmates on the fire lines are also exposed to higher risks for cancer and infectious diseases. In the summer of 2017, 10 inmates caught valley fever while working on a fire crew in Fresno, according to a Nov. 17, 2018, *Time* magazine story.

Still, officials say this will save the county money. "There is a cost to the Sheriff of $81 per inmate per day while in fire-suppression training at the Training Facility and $10 per day for each inmate housed in the Fire Camps," states the staff report. "Overall, there is a cost savings to the County because the cost to Sheriff to incarcerate an inmate in the Orange County jail system is approximately $115.49 per day."

The use of inmate firefighters is also a windfall for the state. California prison-inmate firefighters are paid $2 per day, plus another $1 per day if they are on the fire line. (Compare this to the $3,000 to $4,000 Cal Fire firefighters make each month.) In 2018, Capital & Main reported that the estimated savings was $100 million per year.

For Dr. Lindsey Raisa Feldman, a sociocultural anthropologist at the University of Memphis, there's no question these kinds of wages are exploitative. Feldman, who has studied inmate firefighters extensively, even got certified to fight wildfires so she could observe them up close; over a two-year period in Arizona, she suited up and fought a dozen wildfires alongside them. "Prison labor is inherently exploitative," Feldman says. "They make very little money, and it's risky work. I am not a proponent of any labor that exploits individuals for such low pay. And often, these individuals would say, 'Absolutely, we're slave labor.'"

Inmate labor has grown dramatically in recent years. According to Pacific Standard, half of all the nation's inmates—870,000 people—work while incarcerated. And prison labor has cost civilian workers their jobs. In 2012, CNN Money reported that Alabama-based uniform manufacturer American Apparel laid off 150 employees because the company kept losing contracts to Unicor, once known as Federal Prison Industries, which also makes uniforms.

That's why the ACLU opposes the current wage structure for prison inmates. "The best way to protect prisoner workers is to treat them as much as possible like non-incarcerated employees," David Fathi, the ACLU's National Prison Project director, said in November 2018. "There's no reason they shouldn't be paid a real wage, protected by occupational health and safety laws, and compensated for injuries on the job. The hundreds of prisoners risking their lives on the fire lines deserve nothing less."

COURTESY OF CDCR

At the same time, some good does come from the situation. For inmates, the work is a break from the monotony of prison life. And though their wages may be scant, inmates receive other compensation. "Inmates assigned to the Fire Camp Program receive additional custody credits, shortening the inmates' custody stays," states the county staff report. "Inmates assigned to the Fire Camps also receive counseling, educational and vocational training, such as sober living, college correspondence, general education diplomas, associates' degrees and religious services."

Ironically, the one benefit that seems to make fire crew work so attractive—work experience the inmate can use when he or she returns to civilian life—is largely closed to inmates. In California, most fire departments want prospective firefighters to have an EMT license, which you can't get if you have a criminal record. There is some hope, in the form of Assembly Bill 1812, signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown in 2018. That bill makes it possible for those with criminal records to get an "emergency medical responder" license, which is at a lower level than EMT, though it's unclear if that opens a path to employment for inmate firefighters.

During her research, Feldman found other advantages for inmates who joined fire crews, though the Arizona and California programs are different. For instance, Arizona's program is much smaller than California's and doesn't have Fire Camps; inmates there go straight from the main yard to the fire lines. Arizona also doesn't segregate its inmate firefighters by race, while California does. Most impressive, though, is that inmate firefighters in Arizona don't wear coveralls that set them apart from their civilian counterparts, as they do in California. "If inmate firefighters walked into a restaurant, they would get rounds of applause," Feldman says. "The people applauding them had no clue they were inmates."

Feldman also observed what she called a "flattening of hierarchies" on the lines. In cases where inmates on the line may have more experience or knowledge of firefighting, they're instructed to speak out if they ever observe their attendant correctional officers—who are also certified to fight wildfires—doing something they consider unsafe.

That being said, Feldman was appalled to discover that Arizona inmates assigned to fire crews were mostly fed the same low-calorie food found in prisons. "They're operating at a caloric deficit, and that's not acceptable," she says.

According to Feldman, the recidivism rate for inmate firefighters in Arizona was very low, though that's "purely anecdotal" because state officials there don't track recidivism rates by prison labor program. California has maintained a steady 50 percent recidivism rate over the past decade, according to a state Auditor's report released in January, but it also doesn't track recidivism for Fire Camp inmates.

With inmate fire crews growing each year, there will be plenty of time for further study. "Prison labor will always expand," Feldman says. "That won't change, unless something massively changes in society. But with climate change, I don't see this stopping."

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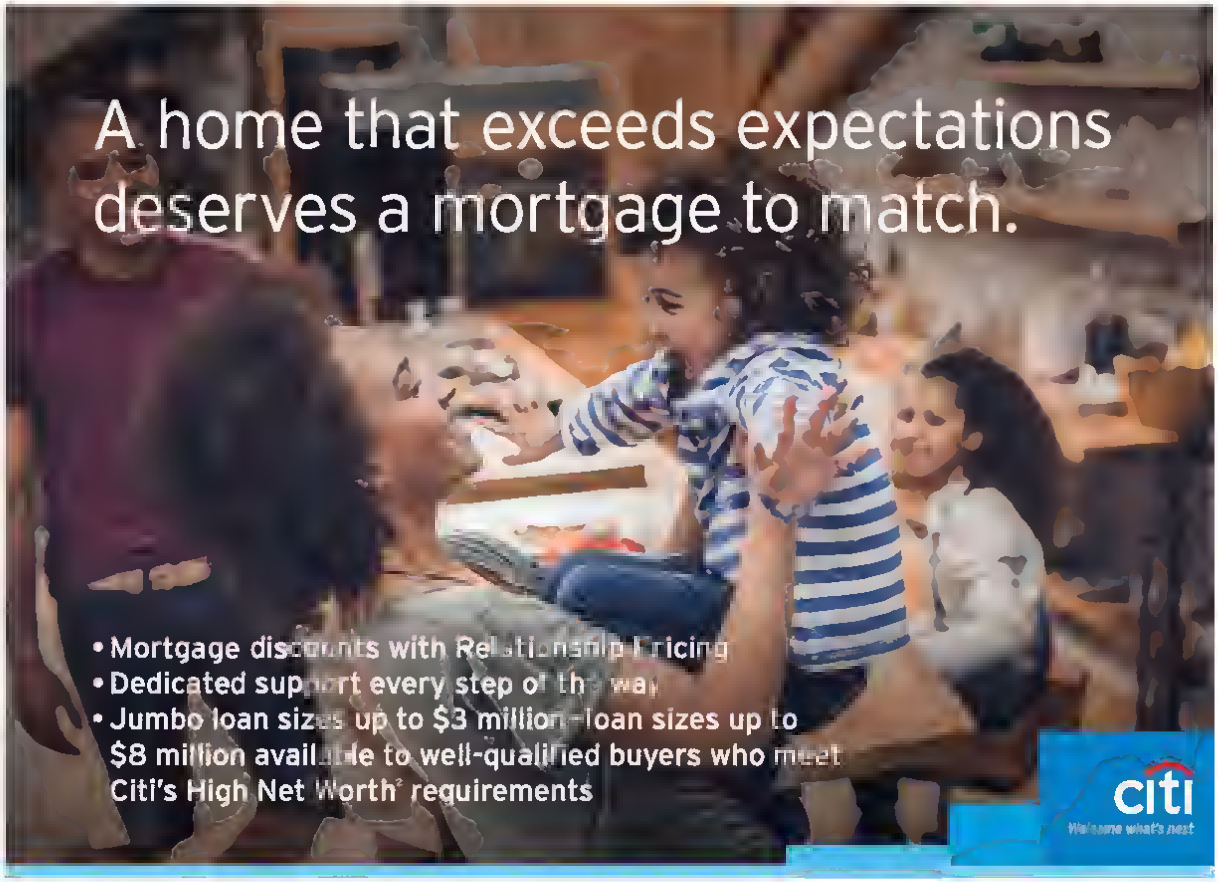
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Lab Mice

Professor Stephanie Takaragawa's "Disneyland: The Anthropology of Space and Place" at Chapman University is no Mickey Mouse course. Students steep themselves in social theory, reading assigned articles before going to Disneyland to observe why people behave the way they do. They learn about Michel Foucault's ideas of power and surveillance while discussing the Frankfurt School's "Culture Industry," then put theories to the test.

"On the first day of class that we go to Disneyland, they all have to bring a field notebook," says Takaragawa, who has taught the class for a decade. "They have to sit in one place and observe a repeatable behavior."

That could be people getting in line, buying churros or posing for pictures in front of Sleeping Beauty's Castle. One keen observation came when a couple trading barbs started causing a scene. The class tailed them as the pair took their dispute outside the gates and resolved it before returning. "You can't be angry inside Disneyland because you're ruining everybody's experience," explains Takaragawa.

On another occasion, the class read up on consumer capitalism only to be beckoned to the Emporium with wallets open after an announcement about rose-gold mouse ears being restocked.

Takaragawa's isn't the only Disney-themed class inside OC's ivory towers. In addition to two others offered at Chapman, Cal State Fullerton's Andi Stein teaches the graduate-level "Deconstructing Disney" for the Communications Department, and Roland Betancourt, an art history and visual-studies professor at UC Irvine, recently put together a "Disneyland: Art, Architecture and Operation" course.

However, Takaragawa's class is positioned during the school's monthlong interterm in January, with once-a-week trips to the park. She ditches textbooks in favor of the cheapest annual pass—a cost-effective move—but shifting blackout dates sacked the class this year. The professor is hopeful it'll be back on schedule in 2020.

"Our reality is socially constructed," says Takaragawa. "As an anthropologist, I have to say that Disney is just more successful in making people participate in its culture."

GSANROMAN@OCWEEKLY.COM

HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

Job Creator

BOB AUL

You are the Mexican flower vendor with bouquets in hand by the freeway offramp. Sometimes people roll down their windows and buy from you. Other times, they keep on driving. But on this day you did something a little special. You gave a homeless man a couple of bouquets to sell to commuters coming to a stop at a nearby offramp. He did the rounds up and down the sidewalks. In his best sales pitch, he rubbed his belly to tell people he felt hungry and that by selling a bouquet or two, he'd earn enough money to buy a bite to eat. Not even the cruelest in our county could scoff at that honest hustle! We made a U turn, bought some flowers and shared a parting smile with the Mexican street vendor. *Gracias*, job creator!

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RETURN OF THE SWAMP THING

LIKE HIS PREDECESSORS, NEW ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF DON BARNES RUNS A TOXIC AGENCY

BY R. SCOTT MOXLEY

CHAPTER ONE

For bored cops seeking action, there's probably no easier place to score than the Southern California motels where petty drug dealers rendezvous with users. At 12:45 p.m. on Feb. 15, 2016, that sweet spot for Deputy Nicholas Petropulos of the Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) was the parking lot at the Extended Stay of America in Yorba Linda near the 91 freeway. Though a fellow officer assigned to investigate events of that afternoon would later falsify an official record to help justify Petropulos' deadly presence, the deputy had received no call for help.

First as a cop in Brea, and then, beginning in 2012, with the OCSD, Petropulos knew that Extended Stay, located a few miles from the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, was his proverbial shooting-fish-in-a-barrel site. During his career, he'd conducted approximately 100 investigations there, usually involving minor transactions and yielding an average of 20 arrests per year.

On that February afternoon, Petropulos returned to his favorite hunting ground and, sure enough, observed what he considered highly suspicious activity. Two people talking to each other in the parking lot. Brandon Lee Witt was sitting in the driver's seat of a gold, four-door Toyota Avalon, while Manuel Drought stood nearby. Neither man screamed, ran or brandished a weapon. But Petropulos' suspicion intensified when the men made what he considered another eyebrow-raising move: They dared to look at him as he slowly drove his patrol vehicle by while staring at them.

In the end, that reasoning wasn't necessary to explore what horrific crimes could be under way, as Petropulos had found his legal hook for escalation. Witt's car didn't show a front license plate, a California Vehicle Code infraction. The deputy drove out of view, stopped and waited. When nothing more happened, he returned to the scene. "I decided to investigate," he eventually explained under oath.

After parking the OCSD cruiser at an angle that allowed his patrol video-recording system (PVS) to catch the upcoming encounter's audio, but thwarted it from capturing meaningful video, Petropulos approached Witt, who'd remained in his car. The deputy asked, "What's going on, man?"

Witt replied, "I'm in the middle of moving."

"Do you have anything in the car illegal?"

"No."

"Anything I need to worry about?"

"Not at all."

"Is this your car?"

"Yeah. . . . Did I do anything wrong?"

"You had no front plate on the car when I looked at it earlier."

"It's right here."

Having been previously victimized by a person impersonating an officer, Witt was frightened to obey commands to exit the car. He asked the deputy, "Can I verify your identity?" And, "Can I at least call your sergeant?"

Petropulos wasn't happy with the questions. "You're lucky I haven't ripped you right out."

Voicing concern that Witt might be using his right hand to reach for a weapon, the deputy began grabbing him.

"Hey, there's no need to touch me

like that," Witt said.

"Dude, I swear to God," Petropulos replied.

"Look, stop," Witt said. "Why are you assaulting me?"

Claiming he wasn't getting full compliance with his commands, the deputy launched a series of lethal threats, saying, "I'm going to shoot you!"

Witt pleaded, "No."

"I'm going to fucking shoot you," said Petropulos, who would unholster his department-issued Glock handgun.

"I'm scared," said Witt. "I'm scared."

The banter continued with Witt alarmed by the deputy's aggressino and the deputy frustrated that his suspect allegedly wouldn't keep his right hand in plain sight.

"You're going to get shot, motherfucker!" Petropulos declared.

"No, please don't!" Witt cried. "Please!"

Neither the deputy nor Brian Callagy, a fellow cop who arrived as backup, saw the suspect holding a knife or a gun or even the appearance of a weapon anywhere inside the car. If anyone should have been in fear for his life, it was the 39-year-old Witt, who'd consumed methamphetamines that day. Unarmed and surrounded by two deputies, he posed no immediate threat.

Petropulos said, "Fuck it," placed the Glock at point-blank range on Witt's left shoulder and fired.

There was a moan, and then nothing. According to an autopsy, the 40 mm bullet ripped through the victim's arm, chest, ribs, heart, diaphragm and liver. Witt's right foot had hit the gas in reaction, causing the Toyota to race over a curb and crash into a concrete drainage ditch. Though still-spinning tires produced smoke, there was no movement inside the vehicle. Bleeding profusely and unconscious, a dying Witt was left unattended for a period of time because, the deputy claims, he still believed Witt might reach for a gun.

In the aftermath, Petropulos—who makes more than $255,000 annually in public funds—told a tale at odds with the audio recording and probability. According to the deputy, a seated and miraculously strong Witt used his left hand to "pull parts of my shoulder and upper body through the window of the vehicle" while his right hand extended in the opposite direction searching for that nonexistent gun.

Petropulos hoped that people would believe Witt tried to drive away with him hanging halfway out the Toyota's window. He also declared himself the victim of a felony assault by an "aggressive" suspect. He noted he'd suffered a light bruise and scratch on his right arm. It was enough to make him "fear for my life," the deputy said.

Employment of that well-worn catchphrase, whether genuine or not, often acts as a legal prophylactic for police seeking immunity from courthouse accountability, but additional chapters in the Witt saga were yet to be written.

CHAPTER TWO

Chicago police were on the lookout in October 2014 for an auto burglary suspect when they spotted 17-year-old Laquan McDonald acting bizarrely on the street while holding a 3-inch knife.

McDonald, who was high on PCP, disobeyed commands to drop the knife. But nine of the 10 cops on the scene saw no reason to gun him down.

Officer Jason Van Dyke, however, wasn't in any mood for de-escalation. He waited all of six seconds after exiting his patrol vehicle to shoot McDonald in the back, driving him to the pavement. With the suspect still down, the cop emptied the rest of his magazine, firing 15 more bullets from his 9 mm semi-automatic handgun. An autopsy determined McDonald had been shot in his chest, neck, head, both arms, right leg and back.

The follow-up investigation by the Chicago Police Department ruled the homicide "justified" after rewriting history. The department accepted Van Dyke's story that McDonald had pointed the knife blade and "lunged" at him. That tale bolstered the cop's report that he'd been scared and feared for his life.

Months later, police weren't able to keep wraps on all the videos of the shooting, footage that contradicted Van Dyke's version of events. The knife in McDonald's hand had been folded when found at the scene, and he'd never lunged. There was also evidence that cops destroyed valuable dash-cam videos and "intentionally damaged" audio recordings of the killing.

Disgusted by the incident, community groups hosted numerous emotional street protests. The City Council gave McDonald's family a $5 million settlement and hoped there would be no further embarrassing revelations of police corruption tied to the case that a civil trial might uncover. Van Dyke's prosecutor told a jury that none of the shots was necessary. The panel convicted Van Dyke for murder and 16 counts of battery for each fired bullet. During a January sentencing hearing, he received a prison punishment of six years and nine months.

But there's a fascinating twist: Not everybody agreed on who'd been victimized. Embedded among cop ranks were people in denial. A cop-union official told a reporter the jury was "duped" and had "stabbed" police "in the back." Another said, "The Chicago Police Department is standing with an officer we think acted as an officer."

It's not just in Chicago where police routinely protect their own scoundrels with lies, doctored evidence and media campaigns.

CHAPTER THREE

"Each deputy must be entrusted with well-reasoned discretion in determining the appropriate use of force in each incident," OCSD policy states. "The use of force to accomplish unlawful objectives is prohibited. The Department will not tolerate excessive and/or punitive force."

Those statements are noble theories—not reality. Excessive force is often celebrated in the department run by Sheriff Donald Barnes. Beating someone unconscious or taking a life can be a precursor to career advancement and bigger salaries.

Deputy Michael Devitt bolstered his résumé about 30 minutes before sunrise on Aug. 19, 2018, when he approached a passed-out man who was slumped over in the driver's seat of a black Jeep. Mohamed Sayem had been out drinking the night before and decided to sleep off his insobriety in the parking lot of a pool hall and bar. Devitt's verbal efforts didn't wake Sayem, so the deputy opened the car door, removed the key from the ignition and began shaking the suspect, who was clearly inebriated. Asked for identification, a mumbling Sayem handed the officer his Bic lighter.

To be fair, there's no doubt Devitt and his colleague on the scene, Eric Ota, had a duty to investigate the situation. But after telling Sayem to stay in the Jeep, Devitt began grabbing the suspect, who recoiled and said there was no reason for the aggression. "Don't touch me like that," Sayem said.

The deputy then yanked the wobbly suspect out of the vehicle, punched him in the stomach and violently slammed his fist into the man's face six times. The third blow knocked Sayem unconscious. Ota then helped Devitt throw Sayem face-down to the pavement before handcuffing the man. Sayem regained consciousness and asked if they were going to shoot him.

"[I'd] like to," said Ota.

Four minutes later, with the sun on the verge of rising, OCSD Sergeant Christopher Hibbs arrived and Devitt explained events. He said he'd grabbed an uncooperative Sayem and yanked him out of the Jeep "to control him." He'd "punched him probably four times on the right side of his face" because Sayem was "basically standing over me now, and he is way taller than I am," according to an audio recording.

He added that the suspect tried to "bear hug" him, though dash-cam video shows Sayem's right hand clutching the steering wheel until he was punched unconscious.

Two other deputies arrived, Blake Blaney and Brant Lewis, and all five officers huddled around the hood of Devitt's patrol vehicle. The topic of their conversation? Recent beatings of suspects. At one point, Blaney said, "That was a good fight!"

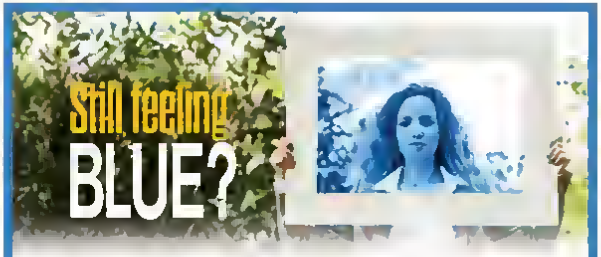
Lewis boasted, "I got in another good one last week."

Moments later, the deputies realized that Hibbs' body mic was still on. Lewis walked over to his superior officer and turned it off; the chatting resumed.

For a deputy trying to talk his way out of an excessive-force case, Hibbs was the ideal boss. In September 2007, near the Anaheim-Stanton border, he'd grown angry with Ignacio Lares, a suspect who refused to give his real name. Though

FELIPE FLORES

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



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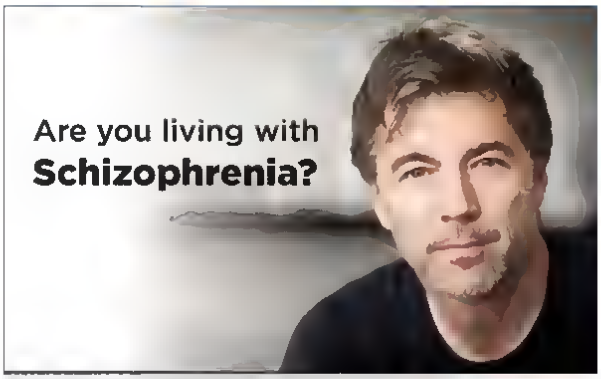

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RETURN OF THE SWAMP THING

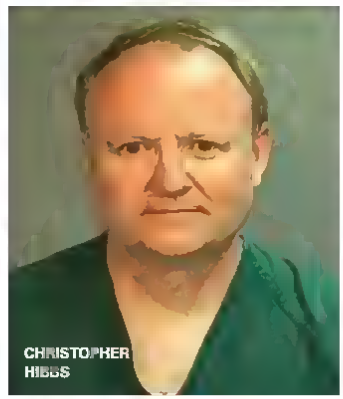
» FROM PAGE 11

Lares was handcuffed and secured in the back of a patrol car without leg room, Hibbs twice fired his Taser weapon. To justify his violence, he claimed he'd felt physically threatened and in danger. But prosecutors believed it was a classic case of excessive force and charged him after securing damning testimony from five other officers—Trent Hoffman, Robert Long, Bryan Thomas, Rob Gunzel and James Wicks—who'd witnessed the tasing. OCSD management, including then-Sheriff Sandra Hutchens, and the deputies' union protested the Hibbs case as unfair.

At the Fullerton trial, which I covered, each of the law-enforcement witnesses diverted from their grand-jury testimony by claiming severe memory loss. Dozens and dozens of times, they testified, "I don't recall" or, "I don't remember." An elderly, male-dominated jury then voted 11 to 1 for acquittal. In fact, three of the jurors told me afterward that Hibbs should have shot Lares. Disgusted prosecutors said they'd witnessed the police "code of silence" in action.

A bit more than a decade later, Hibbs heard Devitt's first oral explanation for the attack on Sayem. In a newer version written when all the deputies had huddled at the scene and had turned off their mics, he embellished the danger he faced with acts that are not recorded on dash-cam video. Now, Sayem supposedly grabbed his utility vest and refused to let go, the implication being that the suspect was trying to grab a weapon. "I believed Sayem was going to continue to try to physically assault me," he wrote to justify the beating.

Memory loss had aided Hibbs in his own excessive-force case. With Devitt's altered tale on his desk, perhaps he thought he'd extend the same courtesy he'd received. He ignored the discrepancies and signed the official report as legitimate.


CHRISTOPHER HIBBS

CHAPTER FOUR

It's standard practice for deputies to conduct surveillance on a property long before a planned raid. But that's not what happened at 6:30 on an April 2003 morning in North Orange County. About a dozen gun-pointing OCSD gang and narcotics deputies broke down the front door of Roberto "Pino" Peralez's tiny 88-year-old home. If they'd followed procedure, they would have known the 69-year-old heroin addict had already left to comply with a court-ordered daily dose of methadone at a Stanton community clinic.

Pissed that he'd missed his target, Deputy Joe Balicki raced to the clinic in an unmarked vehicle and found Peralez driving his decades-old burgundy GMC Safari van toward him. The addict was on his way home, unaware of the raid.

But drug use had taken its toll. Peralez was a fragile figure at 5-foot-7 with bad eyes and bad hearing, according to his daughter.

Balicki jumped in front of the slow-moving, dilapidated van and pointed a 9 mm Sig Sauer handgun at Peralez. Seconds later, three bullets pierced the windshield and destroyed the unarmed man's heart. He died instantly.

An exhilarated (some thought cocky) Balicki told fellow officers that he'd felt his life had been in danger. He then drove to a nearby McDonald's for breakfast and to wait for the OCSD public-relations unit to spin its magic. It worked, at least in the *Los Angeles Times*, which published the headline "Driver, 69, Shot Dead as He Tries to Ram Deputies."

This killer was never held accountable in either criminal or civil court. In fact, Balicki took delight in ending Peralez's life. To celebrate his feat, the sniper-trained deputy placed a trophy of sorts on his OCSD desk: an enlarged photograph of the three tight bullet holes in the victim's windshield.

CHAPTER FIVE

The unexpected, unnecessary death of Witt, a Garden Grove native, left his relatives in shock. The 6-foot-1, 165-pound Witt—who'd struggled with drug addiction, according to his Vietnamese American ex-girlfriend—loved to travel with friends and family. At a church memorial service, his relatively short life was celebrated.

Gary Witt and Kathy Craig, Witt's separated parents, hired Scott D. Hughes of Newport Beach and Dale K. Galipo of Woodland Hills to represent them in a federal wrongful-death lawsuit against OCSD and Petropulos. Hughes and Galipo reported that deputies had punched and kicked Witt's face and head after pulling his dying body from the crashed Toyota.

"Witt never attempted to punch, kick or verbally threaten anyone," the attorneys told U.S. District Court Judge Cormac J. Carney in their March 2017 complaint. "He was unarmed and posed no imminent threat of death or serious physical injury to either Petropulos

COURTESY OF SCOTT O. HUGHES

or any other person [throughout the incident] ... There was no objectively reasonable justification for [the deputy] to resort to the tactics that he did."

Lawyers privately retained at taxpayer expense by the County of Orange on behalf of the defendants spent months trying to kill the lawsuit before it could reach a jury. They claimed the parents didn't technically qualify for the right to sue. They sought immunity from accountability for Petropulos because he is a cop. They argued it had been a righteous killing, and therefore, a jury had no facts to consider opposite of their stance. They battled against the plaintiffs' right to call a police expert who would testify the deputy's conduct had been unprofessional. They even demanded that a future jury never learn that Witt had been unarmed.

When Carney rejected their points as meritless, the county's Board of Supervisors appealed to the U.S. District Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. But they lost there, too. In May, a jury determined that Petropulos used excessive force, violated Witt's constitutional rights and acted with "malice" in the killing. They awarded the parents $3.4 million.

CHAPTER SIX

When it comes to the daily protection of deputies caught in ethical messes, the job falls to Orange County's County Counsel (OCCC). For example, in OCSD's notorious jailhouse-informant scandal, the OCCC helped deputies disobey judicially demanded records that assisted in illustrating how they ran unconstitutional scams, hid or destroyed embarrassing evidence, and repeatedly committed perjury. At the height of the scandal in mid-2017, Catherine Irons, a then-retired lieutenant, testified that OCCC and OCSD secretly agreed to withhold key informant records.

In the Sayem case, the OCCC assigned Kayla Watson the task of shielding Devitt, Ota and Hibbs from accountability. Watson told Judge Kevin Haskins and Sayem defense attorney, Assistant Public Defender Scott Sanders, a lie at a pretrial hearing in December, she claimed that Hibbs had written only one report on the case and that the defense had already received it.

After an in-camera session between only Haskins and Watson, the judge emerged and announced he saw nothing the defense was entitled to receive. A surprised Sanders asked if he'd seen any use-of-force documents. Haskins said OCSD had surrendered no such evidence.

About a week later, Watson reappeared in court. She conceded Hibbs had written a six-page use-of-force report and that she had known of its existence, but that the sheriff's department didn't want it released, even though the defense was entitled to see it. Sanders saw multiple reasons why the document had been hidden; it shows that Hibbs omitted Devitt's first unhelpful explanation for the beating, and it also documented he'd obtained and reviewed Ota's dash cam to reach his conclusions.

But that's a huge problem for Watson and OCSD. They had failed to surrender Ota's dash-cam video. When confronted by Sanders, Watson said there is no Ota footage. Haskins then forced Hibbs to sign a declaration backing up that assertion. The sergeant claimed he'd erroneously written he'd watched the video when he hadn't because it doesn't exist.

The Ota audio from the dash cam is, as department officials surely know, crucial. It would cover an 11-minute gap at the scene when Devitt revised his story while surrounded by the other four deputies. "Hibbs helped Devitt to conceal the truth about his assault on [Sayem]," said Sanders, who plans to press for more honest disclosures at a hearing this month.

CHAPTER SEVEN

After the OCSD deputies' uses of force when facing imaginary threats, they suffered the following fates. Petropulos won "deputy of the year" honors, Barnes awarded Devitt a coveted assignment craved by his 2,000 sworn colleagues; Hibbs was promoted to sergeant; and Balicki rose through the ranks and now works as a commander on Barnes' executive staff, the one lamely asserting that anyone who questions the department's lack of ethics is "anti-law enforcement."

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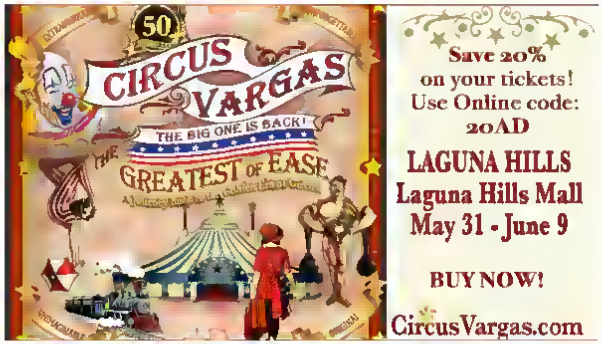

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saturday›
WHICH WAY TO THE BEACH?

COURTESY OF KINGS KALEIDOSCOPE

fri/06/07

[DANCE CLUBS]

WHO'S SIDE ARE YOU ON?

Backstreet Boys vs. *NSYNC

It was the battle that pitted female fans and TRL viewers against one another. If you don't remember the late '90s tha debate over tha Backstreet Boys vs. *NSYNC tore families apart. But now, instead of duking it out over which boy-band kingpin is truly the best, Club 90s celebrates their music with a large-scale dance party. If you really want to clash over whether "Backstreet's back" or if they should say "bye, bye, bye" to the naysayers, then put on your dancing shoes and come down to the House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk.

Club 90s: Backstreet Boys vs. *NSYNC at the House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Ste. 337, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim. 9:30 p.m. $15. —WYOMING REYNOLDS

[COMEDY]

Can't Cancel This

Tone Bell

Fans of the Kathy Bates-starring Netflix series *Disjointed* are already acquainted with comedian Tone Bell, who appears as recurring character Carter, a security guard living with PTSD from serving in Iraq. The Georgia-raised actor has also been on numerous sitcoms and programs, including his own Showtime comedy special *Tone Bell: Can't Cancel This* and the CBS sitcom *Fam*. But the seasoned actor started his comedy career at open mics in his free time before landing larger opportunities in show business. Now with his name blowing up and more starring roles on the horizon, Bell is connecting with his standup roots tonight at the cozy Rec Room.

MORE ONLINE »
OCWEEKLY.COM

Tone Bell at the Rec Room, 7227 Edinger Ave., Huntington Beach, (714) 316-0775, www.recroomhb.com. 7:30 p.m. $15-$25. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

sat/06/08

[CONCERT]

THEY'RE BACK!

The Lonely Island

Over the past decade, the Lonely Island have become known as incredibly talented jokesters with an incredible knack for blending modern music with hilarious topical songs—with "I'm on a Boat" and "Lazy Sunday" as prime examples. Now, Andy Samberg, Jorma Taccone and Akiva Schaffer are back with a new release (a "visual poem"), a concept/rap album about the Bash Brothers (Jose Canseco and Mark McGwire) who played for the Berkeley natives' Oakland A's (it's also an upcoming Netflix special). Though historically they haven't played too many shows, the trio brings this rare tour to the Observatory, where hijinks will undoubtedly ensue.

The Lonely Island at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com. 8 p.m. $50. —WYOMING REYNOLDS

[FESTIVALS]

Beach Party!

Beachfest 2019

Where else but Beachfest can you find professional skateboarding demonstrations, DJ sets, an open-air market, a kids' zone, a jiu jitsu martial-arts showcase *and* a live-music festival? For one day only, this Huntington Beach event provides free entertainment galore for every member of the family. Check out musical performances by Kings Kaleidoscope, Propaganda and Enterline, among others, witness the skating techniques of Steve Caballero and others, guffaw in awe of the moves of Brazilian jiu jitsu fighter Léo Vieira, and more, enthrall the kiddies with entertainment such as balloon art and games. Or shop away your cares via a variety of local businesses. If this fest ain't got it, you don't need it!

Beachfest 2019 at Huntington Beach Pier, Main Street and Pacific Coast Highway, Huntington Beach, www.beachsidesummerfest.com. 11 a.m. Free. —SCOTT FEINBLATT

sun/06/09

[FOOD & DRINK]

Burns So Good

SoCal Hot Sauce Festival

More than a dozen local hot-sauce companies will gather at the SoCal Hot Sauce Festival to fire up your palates with a range of artisanal, handcrafted, flavorful liquid fire. Fortunately, this heat fest is held at Anaheim's Towne Park Brewery & Taproom, where endless beer (and other beverages) is available for purchase to soothe those burning taste buds. Admission is free, but you have to register for a ticket online as space is limited. Bonus: Towne Park Brewery is dog-friendly, so you can bring your pup to the event—but don't give them any hot sauce, obviously.

SoCal Hot Sauce Festival at Towne Park Brewery & Taproom, 1566 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, (714) 844-2492, www.eventbrite.com. Noon. Free; RSVP through Eventbrite site required. —ERIN DEWITT

[CONCERT]

Starting a Movement

Weapons of Mass Creation

Weapons of Mass Creation have been putting their indelible mark on OC's underground scene for years, fusing funk, reggae, cumbia, hip-hop and rap. The crew, five of whom are siblings, reconnected after college and thought to put a more political spin in their lyrics, rapping about the perils and pitfalls of capitalism, immigration, misogyny and police brutality. They also enlighten fans on their social media about social-justice topics. Defiantly risking exposure to stay true to their political leanings is what this group is all about, so come to the Continental Room tonight and get inspired to raise hell in your community.

Weapons of Mass Creation, Kiki Diago and LINDS at the Continental Room, 115 W. Santa Fe Ave., Fullerton, (714) 526-4529; www.facebook.com/continentalroomoc. 9 p.m. Free. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

mon/06/10

[CONCERT]

Start a Riot

WASI

Queer Mondays LBC takes over Long Beach's Que Sera every week, and tonight's lineup is stacked, with OC-raised, Los Angeles-based electro-pop outfit WASI headlining. Currently embarking on their Love Is Gay tour, WASI's energetic, immersive pop punk, which they've coined "riot pop," has the power to liberate listeners both politically and euphorically. Experience it tonight, with stellar performances by Polartropica, Punk Crush and Tyler Vincent to follow.

WASI at Que Sera, 1923 E. Seventh St., Long Beach, (562) 599-6170, www.facebook.com/queermondayslbc. 9 p.m. $5 cash donation. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

tue/06/11

[CONCERT]

Come Together

RAIN—Tribute to the Beatles

The Beatles' legacy is without question, and tribute bands are aplenty. But tonight's performance hopes to bring something new to the Beatles-music experience. Instead of bringing a "greatest hits" catalog, RAIN will exclusively perform songs from the Fab Four's album *Abbey Road*, plus breathtaking visuals projected via LED, high-definition screens. Besides that, the members of RAIN are adept in embodying the stage presence of each individual Beatle, making this a time-warp experience you won't soon forget!

RAIN—Tribute to the Beatles at City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, (714) 712-2700, www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com. 8 p.m. $70. —AIMEE MURILLO

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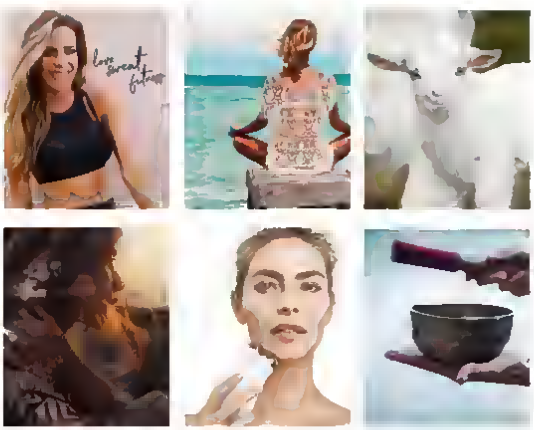


wed/06/12

[CONCERT]

Weird and Wonderful

Kid Congo & the Pink Monkey Birds

As a legendary member of seminal punk/garage-rock groups the Gun Club, the Cramps, and Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, among others, Kid Congo Powers has long been an underrated influence in contemporary punk's flirtation with the gloomier, darker sound of Goth. But instead of resting on his laurels in retirement, Powers has been deftly experimenting with new sounds, and he and his group the Pink Monkey Birds have been playing within the garage-punk genre to shake it up for die-hard listeners of every age. Tonight's show at Alex's Bar comes with the news of a tour and a recent reissue of 2009's *Dracula Boots* album—a welcome sign that a legend such as Powers is getting the admiration and acclaim he deserves.

MORE ONLINE
OCWEEKLY.COM

Kid Congo & the Pink Monkey Birds with Slim Cessna's Auto Club and Jad Weddings at Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim Blvd., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com. 9 p.m. $15. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

[ART]

SUPER BLOOM

'Takashi Murakami—Flower Power'

Get a lesson in recent pop-art history at Martin Lawrence Gallery and start saving your pennies toward the purchase of an instantly iconic—if undoubtedly ironic—piece by one of the world's most famous contemporary artists. Takashi Murakami's recognizable, easily understandable, "superflat" style embraces the exuberantly two-dimensional and arguably most accessible and available perspective through floral kaleidoscopes informed by manga, anime and just about every other post-war commercial imperative of manufactured mass-image excess. High or low art—or perhaps both—these perverse pastorals gone electric are either comforting or frustrating, democratizing or authoritarian, but each one insisting on its own weird power.

"Takashi Murakami—Flower Power" at Martin Lawrence Gallery, 3333 Bear St., Costa Mesa, (949) 793-0134, martinlawrence.com. 10 a.m. Free. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

thu/06/13

[FILM]

WHAT A WAY TO MAKE A LIVIN'!

9 to 5

Jane Fonda struck box-office gold in 1980 with her feminist comedy *9 to 5*, a dark drama retooled to accommodate the talents of comedic giant Lily Tomlin and country superstar Dolly Parton. Under the helm of director Colin Higgins, the film ushered in the 1980s "modern working woman" and unapologetically called out workplace harassment, pay inequality, sexism and gendered power imbalances—and it was also a riot. To celebrate this iconic movie, its women stars and its gay director, MenAlive present a special benefit screening with all proceeds going to the Orange County Gay Men's Chorus, which is dedicated to promoting acceptance and understanding for the LGBTQ community. So, get your Maul-wows on, steer clear of the "Skinny N Sweet," and join the girls and gays for one of the pluckiest underdog revenge comedies of all time!

9 to 5 MenAlive Benefit at the Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Ste. 100, Santa Ana, (714) 285-8422, thefridacinema.org. 7 p.m. $15. —SR DAVIES

[FOOD & DRINK]

Cheers!

Summer Cocktails In the Garden

If you've ever had one of the exquisite cocktails offered at the Farmhouse at Roger's Gardens, you'd know how amazingly refreshing they are thanks to season-appropriate blends of herbs and elixirs, topping nearly every cocktail menu in Orange County. Now you, too, can learn how to level up your mixology game with this amazing summer series on crafting delicious drinks. Today's workshop teaches participants how to shake up the classic gin and tonic with herbs grown in personal container gardens, as demonstrated by Roger's Gardens' in-house horticulturist Suzanne Hetrick. Farmhouse's Anthony Laborin will then guide guests in how to infuse said herbs into your libations. Materials are included in this invigorating class.

Summer Cocktails In the Garden at Roger's Gardens, 2301 San Joaquin Hills Rd., Corona del Mar, (949) 640-5800, www.rogersgardens.com. 5 p.m. $75. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

Keep Calm and Curry On

Nourish offers Ayurvedic indian food to those who can appreciate it

BY EDWIN GOEI

At the new Indian restaurant in Costa Mesa called Nourish, you can't order takeout chicken tikka masala or gorge yourself at an all-you-can-eat lunch buffet. This is a different kind of Indian place, one that operates by Ayurvedic tenets. Not knowing what that meant, I looked it up—and fell into a rabbit hole of information that, frankly, gets very technical very fast. Although I remain ignorant of the finer details, I read enough to discover it's one of the oldest systems of medicine in the world, with roots in India. According to the National Institutes of Health, "It's based on ancient writings that rely on a 'natural' and holistic approach to physical and mental health."

But as it relates to food, all I really needed to know I learned from the restaurant's website, which explains that Ayurvedic practitioners believe foods "such as grains, fruits, vegetables, seeds, beans, herbs and roots are vital carriers and balancers for the life force of the body." What that means is Nourish serves vegetarian food, which shouldn't be surprising since more than 30 percent of Indians are vegetarian. But it bans frozen or canned vegetables, as Ayurvedic cooks also believe that "the life force of food" is "destroyed or reduced" when it's old or processed.

When I got to the restaurant on a Saturday, I wasn't looking for a lack of a freezer. I did, however, notice the lack of Indian customers. It seems that Nourish—with its fast-casual setup and a wall painted to the ceiling with colorful flowers—caters more to Westerners attracted by the Ayurvedic lifestyle or who were vegetarian already. There was a young Asian couple seated at the counter and a middle-aged Caucasian woman who had just finished her meal while sitting cross-legged at an elevated carpeted area next to the door. And then there was a group of women with Czech accents to whom the owner paid special attention. I saw him sit with them to talk about the health benefits of Ayurveda, as if they weren't already convinced.

For the other customers, the menu did the job for him. On the laminated sheet, the Holy Kitchari—rice, moong lentils and vegetables cooked together with spices into a mass resembling yellow-tinted oatmeal—is advertised as Ayurveda's holy food. It's purported to be good for "healing, digestive problems, cleansing, babies and spiritual clarity." A bowl of it costs $9, but for a buck more each, there's the option of "balancing your dosha" by adding fresh ginger, cilantro, coconut or lime, with each additional item marked by a symbol that refers to a chart of the "biological energies" it's supposed to affect.

WHICH IS WHAT?

EDWIN GOEI

If you're vegan, gluten intolerant, or averse to garlic and onion, there are symbols for those, too. Allergic to dairy, nuts, peanuts or soy? The menu has you covered. But what the symbols won't tell you is whether you will enjoy the dish.

The more I ate of the Holy Kitchari, the more I disliked it. The bowl was bland—an adjective I never thought I'd use to describe an Indian meal. It also had the texture of baby food. If I was actually ill, had digestive issues or was an infant, I might have liked it better. But as a carnivore accustomed to high-sodium, high-fat, processed foods, it was difficult to reconcile the excess of good intentions with the lack of flavor I perceived.

What I ultimately decided is that the lens of a restaurant critic is the wrong one to use here. I didn't belong to the audience for which this meal and this restaurant is intended. I was an outsider and a non-believer.

When I tried "The Nourishing Plate"—a thali sampler with rice, bread, sambar, dal, rice pudding and the three featured vegetable dishes of the day—I had trouble distinguishing the difference between the sambar, the dal and one of the featured veggies. I began to wonder: Were they all the same dish just repeated three times? Or was I just insensitive to the nuances of its spicing?

I liked the other two featured dishes on that platter—particularly the butternut squash, zucchini and bottle gourd prepared in the style of Thai green curry—but even here I had to keep myself from reaching for the salt shaker.

It wasn't until I reread the restaurant's manifesto that I found the enlightenment I was searching for: "All of our food is prepared mildly spiced and mildly salted, and our sweets tend to be mildly sweetened."

Finally, it was the thing that explained the food in plain English and gave it context. If I had known it before going in, I might have approached the dishes with the proper expectations and perspective. But honestly, I think I still would've ended up at Wienerschnitzel immediately afterward, as I did that afternoon, chomping down a greasy corn dog with plenty of ketchup and mustard—my doshas be damned.

NOURISH

1170 Baker St., Ste. G2, Costa Mesa, (714) 617-4001, www.nourishayurveda.org. Open Mon.-Sat., 7:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Meals, $6-$17. No alcohol.

WHAT THE ALE

» GREG NAGEL

Out of Hibernation

A breeze pours into the grizzly sized brewhouse through industrial rollup windows. High backed, cushy chairs line the front bar, and a natural wooden table sits in the back. Around the corner, mermaid wallpaper lines a wall next to a classic sofa. "Wow" sneaks out of my mouth, which has been agape at the sight of Salty Bear Brewing, the newest stop on Randolph Avenue's Costa Mesa Beer Trail.

"I was the original brewer at JT Schmidt's and Bayhawk," says Joe Scagliotti, the founder and brewer at Salty Bear. "I wasn't going to go into beer again until I was the owner.... and here I am!"

Despite the proliferation of new breweries in Orange County, Scagliotti is confident about his bright new spot's chances. "I've wanted to open my own thing since 1994," he says. "My theory is people aren't going to stop making pizza. People aren't going to stop making coffee. People are going to keep doing what they're going to do, and if you're good, you're gonna stick. No one ever says there are too many burger joints, right?"

The Costa Mesa native is most excited to open a business in his family's neighborhood. Saturday's grand opening will feature 11 new beers, as well as live music and food.

"Perhaps the coolest thing about being around small local breweries is you can always experience good, fresh, new beers," says Scagliotti. "I want to keep people experiencing new beers for some time."

SALTY BEAR BREWING

2948 Randolph Ave., Ste. C, Costa Mesa, saltybearbrewing.com

GREG NAGEL

SUMMER TRAVEL ISSUE

TRAVEL MORE, WORK LESS

PUBLISHES

06/20/19

OCWEEKLY. ORANGE COUNTY'S LEADING SOURCE OF NEWS, CULTURE, AND ENTERTAINMENT

ERIN DEWITT

Fire In the Coop

Jay Bird's brings some serious heat

LONG BEACH LUNCH

» ERIN DEWITT

As the spaces inside the LBX Hangar fill up, the buzz surrounding the opening of Jay Bird's Nashville Hot Chicken is the loudest yet.

Fried chicken is one of those polarizing subjects in which everyone has their own idea of what's best. Though Long Beach is already home to several standard bearers—including Roscoe's House of Chicken and Waffles, Gus's World Famous Fried Chicken, and Johnny Rebs' True South Restaurant—there aren't a lot of options for Nashville hot chicken, specifically.

But at Jay Bird's, Nashville hot chicken (fried bird doused in hot sauce) is all it does. In addition to a selection of sauce choices and a few sides, the menu offers six fried-chicken dishes—half a bird, white or dark meat only, a waffle combo, tenders, and a sandwich. That's it.

Executive chef Jay Bogsinske (formerly of Saint Marc in Pacific City) not only masterminded the menu, but also lent his likeness to a caricature muraled on the wall. But this isn't your average mom-and-pop place—Jay Bird's is the latest addition to the Wild Thyme Restaurant Group, a corporation that, although touting several of its concepts as "home grown," manages nearly 20 eateries across several West Coast states and beyond.

Since opening, Jay Bird's social-media posts have announced it must close for the day when the food runs out. So when it opens at 11 a.m. on a Wednesday morning, there's already a line 12 people deep. Within minutes, the line doubles and starts snaking around the Hangar's food-court space. Maybe it's an ingenious marketing strategy, but the staff maneuvering the small-ish open kitchen, with Bogsinske deep in the trenches with them, are hustling. Watching this makes wiping out the inventory seem plausible.

Good fried chicken takes time and love. But after waiting in line for about 20 minutes, with another 20 to go before actually receiving food, the folks behind me began to grumble, scoffing at the prices. The chicken sandwich, with no sides, is $13. Three chicken tenders, dubbed "big," are $11.50.

But this isn't cheap, drive-thru chicken. The poultry here are hormone- and cage-free and all natural, and they are fried in 100 percent peanut oil. For each item, guests can pick from among five heat levels, starting at Plain Jay (no heat) on up to Fire, which warns, "This will get you to the promised land!"

At the time of my visit, only about half of the menu was available: the chicken sandwich, chicken-and-waffles combo, chicken tenders, and sides.

The chicken-and-waffles combo comes with fried tenders, two mini-waffles, a cup of maple syrup and a few sweet pickles (which were excellent). The chicken is juicy and has a thin coating of crispy batter, with some scraggly edges for a satisfying, shattering bite. I ordered mine medium (the middle heat level), and it was mouth-tinglingly fiery. But as crunchy as the outer texture was and as tender as it was inside, the chicken begged for more seasoning. A quick shower of seasoned salt to finish it off would've been perfect. Tip: Eat the waffles first, or they'll get soggy.

The chicken sandwich, probably the fattest chicken breast I've ever been served, comes on a soft roll with coleslaw, those same amazing sweet pickles and "comeback sauce," which is a savory, mayo-based smear. The dish is massive and very messy. I got this one in hot, the penultimate heat level, and that was my personal mistake. It was all heat, completely incinerating any other layer of flavor in the sandwich, including that delicate comeback sauce.

Unless I'm double-dog-dared, I'm not attempting Fire level.

JAY BIRD'S NASHVILLE HOT CHICKEN
4150 McGowen St., Long Beach,
www.jaybirdschicken.com

GREG NAGEL

Healthy Living

Considering veganism at Gratitude Kitchen & Bar

EAT & DRINK THIS NOW
» GREG NAGEL

Recently, a health-nut friend recommended I dn a master cleanse as well as add some more green juices into my diet. "No problem," I thought, as those are the names of two cocktails offered at Newport Beach's Gratitude Kitchen & Bar, a hip and airy place where the number of yoga instructors outnumber dad bods such as mine at least 21 to one.

And then I said five words I've never said at a bar. "I'll have a master cleanse." Bow-tied bartender Dylan Veit, who has been with Gratitude since it opened, combined mezcal, ancho chile, limoncello and maple syrup in a Boston shaker, then strained the results over a foggy square of ice in a rocks glass, garnishing with a lemon peel. The other master cleanse, in which people fast on nothing but lemon juice, cayenne pepper and maple syrup, sounds like torture compared to this inventive, creative cocktail. "Do you think I could lose weight with a diet of only this?" I ask Veit, who chuckles.

Veit comes in early each day to get the bar prepped. "This is a unique bar program, for sure," he says. "Pressing organic fruits and veggies for drinks gives us a lot of fresh flavors. ... Not only that, but they're also nutritious."

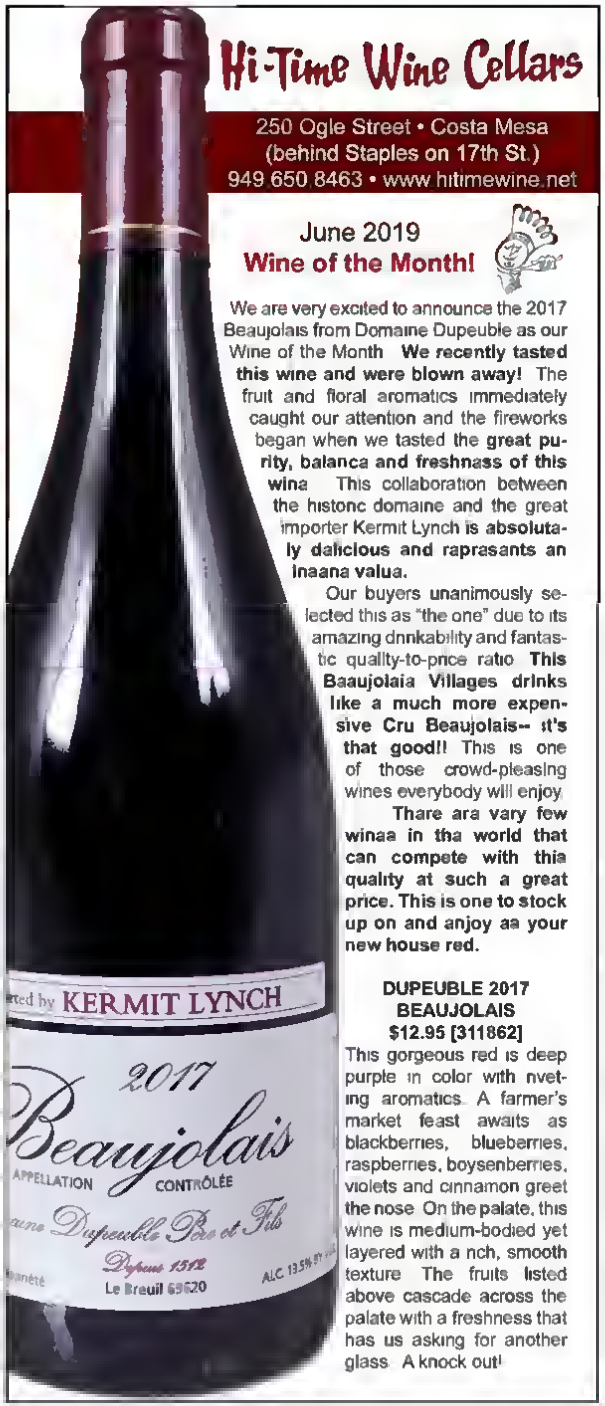
Two drinks highlighted by this process are the Green Juice and the Can't Be Beet.

Green Juice is a bright-green, boozy, health bomb with spinach, cucumber, celery, kale, pineapple, mint and lime; they're amped up to another level with both gin and aquavit. Can't Be Beet is a blazing violet blend of carrot, orange, turmeric, lime, beet and mezcal. Before I tried it, I'd have bet cold hard cash beets mixed with mezcal would be hot garbage. But damn, these drinks are fire. They're not only balanced, nutritious and boozy, but they're also sexy. Just don't spill any on your yoga mat.

I didn't realize Gratitude was a vegan restaurant until I saw the menu, on which classic veggie dishes from around the globe are highlighted with affirming names to use while ordering. There's Terrific, a raw version of a pad Thai kelp noodle salad with an almond twist, and Humble, an Indian dish that ends up being a hearty curry bowl with red lentil dal and creamy roasted garnet yams that light up your palate with heartwarming freshness.

Another thing I didn't expect was a secret menu item I somehow unlocked: Avocado, black beans, pickled carrots, cilantro and vegan crema are piled high atop savory, house-made, crispy tortilla chips. This plate of nachos is appropriately called the Sharing, which was damn hard to do with the tasty, carnitas-like mushrooms scattered like tinsel on a Christmas tree. I could possibly go vegan if food and drinks such as these were available everywhere.

GRATITUDE KITCHEN & BAR
1617 Westcliff Dr., Ste. 112, Newport Beach, (949) 386-8100; gratitudekitchenandbar.com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June 2019
Wine of the Month!
We are very excited to announce the 2017 Beaujolais from Domaine Dupeuble as our Wine of the Month. We recently tasted this wine and were blown away! The fruit and floral aromatics immediately caught our attention and the fireworks began when we tasted the great purity, balanca and freshnass of this wina. This collaboration between the histonc domaine and the great importer Kermit Lynch is absolutely dalicious and raprasants an inaana valua.
Our buyers unanimously selected this as "the one" due to its amazing drinkability and fantastic quality-to-price ratio. This Baaujolaia Villages drinks like a much more expensive Cru Beaujolais-- it's that good!! This is one of those crowd-pleasing wines everybody will enjoy.
Thare ara vary few winaa in tha world that can compete with thia quality at such a great price. This is one to stock up on and anjoy aa your new house red.
DUPEUBLE 2017 BEAUJOLAIS
$12.95 [311862]
This gorgeous red is deep purple in color with nveting aromatics. A farmer's market feast awaits as blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, boysenberries, violets and cinnamon greet the nose. On the palate, this wine is medium-bodied yet layered with a nch, smooth texture. The fruits listed above cascade across the palate with a freshness that has us asking for another glass. A knock out!
KERMIT LYNCH
2017
Beaujolais
APPELLATION
CONTRÔLÉE
Le Breuil 69620

With This Ring . . .

Art meets life and afterlife in *The Proposal*

BY MATT COKER

JILL CAMETUMBLING AFTER

OSCILLOSCOPE LABORATORIES

If you did not know going in that *The Proposal* is a documentary, its establishing shots may mislead you into believing you are about to take in a suspenseful thriller (which, in a sense, you are). Multicolored walls and boxy structures are seen from interesting angles and through changing natural light, which casts shadows that speak of the twists and turns to come.

Actually speaking in voice-over is Jill Magid, a slight woman who looks and sounds younger than her 46 years. *The Proposal* marks the directorial debut of the Brooklyn-based artist, who forms a love triangle of sorts with Italian architectural historian Federica Zanco and one of Mexico's greatest architects, the late Luis Barragan. It's the stuff of UN noir.

Barragán was known for fusing Modernist styles from Europe with his native landscapes. Before he died in his Mexico City home in 1988 and his cremated remains were interred in the family vault at Mezquitán Cemetery in Guadalajara, he had bequeathed his work and copyrights to his business partner, Raul Ferrara.

After Ferrara passed away in 1993, his widow, Rosario Uranga, says she tried without success to sell Barragán's professional archive in Mexico but ultimately consigned it to gallerist Max Protetch in New York. Also in the 1990s, Rolf Fehlbaum, owner and CEO of Swiss furniture company Vitra, proposed marriage to Zanco, who said that in lieu of an engagement ring, she wanted the Barragán archive, which her fiancé went on to buy from Protetch for $2.5 million.

Zanco in 1996 established the Barragan Foundation—registered without the accent, as *The Proposal* frequently reminds—and the architect's archive landed in the basement of Vitra headquarters in Birsfelden, Switzerland. Casa Luis Barragán, the architect's home and studio, is preserved with his original furniture and personal belongings in Mexico City, where architects are invited to study and guided tours for the public are available by appointment. Though Zanco had initially promised Barragan's professional archives would be accessible as well, that had not happened by 2012, when Magid visited Casa Luis Barragán.

It's worth interjecting here, as Magid unapologetically shows in her film, just how obsessed she had become with Barragán by then. So enchanted by his life's work that she was compelled to get inside his head, she requested overnight alone time in Casa Luis Barragan. The request was granted because Magid is an internationally renowned artist known for performance-based exhibitions derived from her having embedded herself with U.S. military personnel, the Dutch secret service and England's largest citywide video-surveillance system.

Magid was forbidden from sleeping in Barragán's bed and instead directed to the bedroom that had been occupied by "all his girlfriends." While living and breathing in the place, Magid learned from the curator the story of how the architect's archives got locked away in Europe.

Pouring on the charm to get access to the archives in 2013, but being dismissed as a mere "artist" by the "scholar" Zanco, planted the seed for "The Barragan Archives," another Magid project aimed at exposing where humanism and authoritarianism cross. However, this time, she could raise a question to be posed over Two-Buck Chuck and Costco cheese cubes at a gallery-exhibit opening: Should anyone be able to forever lock down a beloved artist's legacy? More precisely, as the notes to Magid's ongoing exploration put it, is the examination of the "intersection of the psychological with the judicial, national identity and repatriation, international property rights and copyright law, authorship and ownership."

It is a project that found her buttering up Zanco, coming face-to-face with Zanco and ultimately, with Magid's own proposal, exposing Zanco. The film will tell you that along the way, Magid has won the support of Barragán devotees, colleagues and family members in Mexico, where the artist/filmmaker helped to make the return of the architect's archives a national quest for justice.

Revealing just how far, just how audacious Magid has gone in trying to make that happen is best left unreported here, as it would spoil the impact of her compelling documentary and its double-entendre title. Let's just say a certain family vault at Mezquitán Cemetery in Guadalajara has been disturbed and a certain jeweler's chin is permanently stuck to the floor.

Magid's in-your-face skills transfer seamlessly to her new medium of film, with her artist's eye creating engagingly lit and framed sequences that will make Wes Anderson jealous. Of course, it helps that she could lean on the documentary chops of editor Hannah Buck, whose previous projects include this year's *Vision Portraits*, which profiles blind and visually impaired artists in various mediums, and 2018's *Black Memorabilia*, which explores the market for racialized artifacts.

Buck and Magid spent time in the editing bay cutting the footage collected by cinematographer Jarred Alterman, who previously lensed the docs *Bisbee '17*, about the mass deportation of 1,200 immigrant miners a century ago at the Arizona-Mexico border, and, most important for our purposes here, *Project X*, a short documentary on a top-secret surveillance site in the heart of Manhattan.

Project X was directed by Laura Poitras, who based her film on National Security Agency documents. Poitras is also the executive producer of *The Proposal*, which she originally wanted Magid to make as a documentary short. It's to the credit of both that they realized enough material existed for a feature-length treatment that is in desperate need of a happy ending.

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

THE PROPOSAL
was directed by Jill Magid. Opens Fri. at Edwards Westpark Cinema, Irvine.

Did You Catch the News?

BY MATT COKER

The Third Wife. A 14-year-old (Nguyen Phuong Tra My) becomes the third wife of a wealthy landowner (Long Le Vu) in 19th-century rural Vietnam and seeks to change her status by giving birth to a male child. *Regency Westminster, (714) 893-4222. Thurs., June 6, 2:10, 4:55 & 10 p.m. $8.50-$10.50.*

Okko's Inn. Okko helps her grandmother run a Japanese countryside inn, which is inhabited by ghosts. Presented in Japanese with English subtitles. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., June 6, 2:30, 5:30 & 7:30 p.m. $7-$10.50.*

Herstory. Min Kyu-dong's 2018 documentary is about the long legal battle waged by 10 plaintiffs who suffered as "comfort women" during World War II. *UC Irvine, (949) 824-6117. Thurs. June 6, 6 p.m. Free.*

YASSS! Films based on young-adult novels screen. *Fullerton Public Library, (714) 738-6327. Thurs., June 6 & Thurs, June 13, 6 p.m. Free.*

The Night of the Shooting Stars. Paolo and Vittorio Taviani's 1982 war romdram is set on the Night of San Lorenzo of 1944. *Regency San Juan Capistrano, (949) 661-3456. Thurs., June 6, 7 p.m. $10.*

Rifftrax Live: *Star Raiders.* In 2762, Captain Saber Raine (Casper Van Dien) and his elite squad try to save an unnamed planet's prince and princess from an evil overlord whose head is filled with cherry Jell-O. *Various theaters. www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., June 6 (live) & Tues (encore), 7:30 p.m. $12.50.*

Sheeple. Tehran brothers and drug dealers (Navid Mohammadzadeh and Farhad Aslani) see their lives and family fall into chaos when their gang collapses. *Starlight Cinema City (714) 970-6700. Thurs., June 6, 7:30 & 10:30 p.m. $6-$12.*

The Walkers. Lisset Tania Mendoza premieres her new horror/comedy short about the college life of a group of misfit witches who navigate keggers and demonic possession. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., June 6, 8 p.m. $7.*

Dig Film Festival. Enjoy the best student work from the UC Irvine Digital Filmmaking program. *UCI, (949) 824-3514. Thurs., June 6, 8:30 p.m. Free.*

Halston. Frederic Tcheng's new documentary is on the fashion designer who became a household name in the 1970s, only to see his empire facing obliteration by the Wall Street era. *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Opens Fri. Call theater for times and ticket prices.*

The Spy Behind Home Plate. Moms "Moe" Berg played on five major-league teams during baseball's golden age and was a spy for the OSS during World War II. *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Opens Fri. Call theater for times and ticket prices.*

Shin Godzilla. Los Angeles Arts Society presents this screening of Hideki Anno's 2016 Japanese epic, preceded by a collection of classic monster-movie trailers. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., preshow, 6:30 p.m., screening, 7 p.m. $12-$15.*

Ralph Breaks the Internet. Ralph (voiced by John C. Reilly) and Vanellope (Sarah Silverman) discover a wi-fi router in their arcade leads to a new adventure. *Mariners Library, (949) 644-3151. Fri., 7 p.m. Free.*

Only Lovers Left Alive. A vampire couple (Tom Hiddleston and Tilda Swinton) flee Detroit and land in Morocco, where they seek advice from an elder (John Hurt). *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 10 p.m., Sun., 8 p.m. $7-$10.50.*

Repo! The Genetic Opera! The costumed shadow-cast troupe Addicted to the Knife returns to dance and lip-sync to the 2008 horror-musical opus. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., preshow, 11:30 p.m., screening, mid night. $7-$10.*

Mantra Sounds Into Silence. People apparently find healing and inner peace by singing mantras together. *Remix Yoga, 18834 Brookhurst St., Fountain Valley; remixyoga.com. Sat., 7:15 p.m. $10.*

The Rocky Horror Picture Show. Live shadow-cast troupe Midnight Insanity performs. *Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 439-5435, arttheatrelongbeach.org. Sat., 11:55 p.m. $9-$12.*

Commando. Arnold Schwarzenegger plays a retired special forces colonel who is forced back into action when his daughter (Alyssa Milano) is kidnapped. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sun., 2, 4 & 6 p.m., Mon.-Tues., 2, 4, 6 & 8 p.m. $7-$10.50.*

Her. A romantic relationship develops between a lonely heart (Joaquin Phoenix) and a fully conscious AI device (voiced by Scarlett Johansson). *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sun.-Wed., 2:30, 5:30 & 8 p.m. $7-$10.50.*

Despicable Me. The animated franchise kicks off with Steve Carrel voicing an evil villain who is assisted by mumble-mouthed characters found on collectible fast-food cups. *Edwards Aliso Viejo Stadium 20, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Market Place Stadium 10, (844) 462-7342; Regal La Habra Stadium 16, (562) 690-4909. Tues., 10 a.m. $1.*

The Princess Bride. Swashbuckler Westley (Cary Elwes) tries to save his childhood sweetheart Buttercup (Robin Wright) from marrying a royal douchebag. *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Tues., 7:30 p.m. $8.*

Turbo. This animated family flick has speed-obsessed snail Turbo (voiced by Ryan Reynolds) dreaming of becoming the world's greatest racer. *Edwards Aliso Viejo Stadium 20, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Market Place Stadium 10, (844) 462-7342; Regal La Habra Stadium 16, (562) 690-4909. Wed., 10 a.m. $1.*

The Terminator. A cyborg (Schwarzenegger) is sent from the future to kill a young woman named Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton). *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Wed. Thurs., June 13, 2:30, 5:30 & 8 p.m. $7-$10.50.*

Free Trip to Egypt. Canadian-Egyptian entrepreneur Tarek Mounib and YouTube celebrity and activist Adam Saleh travel across the U.S. to make an intriguing offer: a free trip to Egypt. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Wed., 7 p.m. $12.50.*

Roman Holiday. A bored, sheltered princess (Audrey Hepburn) escapes her guardians and falls in love with an American newsman (Gregory Peck) in Rome. *Starlight Cinema City (714) 970-6700. Wed., 7 p.m. $5-$12.*

Big. A 12-year-old boy (David Moscow) makes a wish that turns him into a 30-year-old man (Tom Hanks). *Regency South Coast Village, (714) 557-5701. Wed., 7:30 p.m. $9.*

The Player. A producer (Tim Robbins) kills a screenwriter (Vincent D'Onofrio), then courts the dead man's girlfriend (Greta Scacchi) while cops nip at his tail. *Fullerton Public Library, (714) 738-6327. Thurs. June 13, 1 p.m. Free.*

Heavy Water. This look at big-wave surfer Nathan Fletcher begins with his grandfather, a pioneer of Oahu's North Shore, and follows through to Nate's current relationship with mammoth breaks. *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., June 13, 7 p.m. $18.50-$12.50.*

***Bite Me* + Joyful Vampire Shindig.** Meredith Edwards' new indie rom-com screens, and its writer/star Naomi McDougall Jones takes audience questions afterward, followed by a shindig for which participants are encouraged to wear getups or outfits that make them feel joyful. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Wed., screening, 8 p.m., shindig, 10:30 p.m. $12.*

The Dead Don't Die. The dead rise from their graves to terrorize a peaceful town. *Starlight Cinema City, (714) 970-6700. Thurs., June 13, 7 & 9:35 p.m. $6-$12.*

9 to 5. Three savvy female employees (Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin and Dolly Parton) endure an evil, chauvinistic boss (Dabney Coleman), but a freak accident, uh, ties him up and prevents him from doing his duties. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., June 13, 7 p.m. $15.*

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OC WEEKLY. ORANGE COUNTY'S LEADING SOURCE OF NEWS, CULTURE, AND ENTERTAINMENT

A New Journey

The Troubador Theater Co. brings its epic *The Odd-Essy* to Casa Romantica

BY JOEL BEERS

Used to be a few things in Orange County theater were as reliable as right-wing nut jobs winning re-election: the Crystal Cathedral's *Glory of Christmas* leading even Jesus to say, "Fuck this overwrought mess"; Hal Landon Jr. starring in South Coast Repertory's *A Christmas Carol* (this December marks his final turn in an incredible 40-year-tenure); and Matt Walker and his Troubadour Theater Co. staging an annual invasion of the county. The troupe was a perennial highlight, displaying the organized chaos of a highly skilled ensemble pushing comedy at such a breakneck pace that the audience was helpless to resist its onslaught.

But after mounting its hyper-kinetic fusions of classic rock and Shakespeare locally every year from 1995 to 2005, the Troubies fell mostly silent. Other than a 2014 Laguna Playhouse run of its *A Midsummer Saturday Night's Fever Dream*, the company has kept closer to home, holding court mostly at the Falcon Theatre in Burbank, the El Portal Theatre in North Hollywood and the Getty Villa in Pacific Palisades.

But the road show returns this week to Casa Romantica Cultural Center and Gardens in San Clemente with *The Odd-Essy*, the troupe's anarchic spin on the epic Greek poem *The Odyssey*. "This show will really be a throwback to our roots," says Walker, the company's artistic director and ringmaster, alluding to when the Troubies rolled into towns from Idaho to Australia and, with little to no rehearsal in the space, mounted a show. "We won't be rehearsing at the venue and won't even see it until we show up and set up. … And then we'll throw this crazy, zany show at the audience, and some things are bound to go off the rails."

Old-timers may remember the Troubies as exclusively Shakespearean, merging (let's call it jackhammering) the Bard's tales with much of the catalog of one recording artist to get *Romeo Hall & Juliet Oates, Fleetwood Macbeth*, and *Hamlet, the Artist Formerly Known as the Prince of Denmark*, among others. The troupe has even expanded into the realms of annual holiday shows (*A Christmas West-Side Story, Frosty the Snow Manilow, A Charlie James Brown Christmas*) and Greek classics (*Abbamemnon, Oedipus the King, Mamal*, featuring the music of Elvis).

The Greek twist results from the work the Troubies have done with the Getty Villa, including booking 27 weekends of performance in 2017. Why the tony art museum with the beautiful grounds ever reached out to such a raucous troupe is anybody's guess (maybe it has something to do with the venue's classic Roman architecture, or perhaps talent is talent), but the pairing caught the attention of Casa Romantica. The 92-year-old, 2.5-acre Spanish Colonial Revival house and grounds, built by San Clemente founder Ole Hanson, was privately owned until a nonprofit took it over in 2001. In the past six years, under the leadership of executive director Berenika Palys, it has catapulted into an award-winning arts institution, averaging about 100 shows per year, including dance, music and art exhibits. Looking for a third summer theatrical production in four years, and wanting something with a hint of the classical, Casa Romantica approached the Troubies.

HALEI PARKER DESIGNS

But there was one problem. The venue wanted a full evening in its 100-seat amphitheater, and the company's current *Odyssey* reworking was a sharply truncated, "20-minute, slam-bam kind of thing," according to Walker, adding it was heavy on the improv and staged on the grounds for passersby.

"We basically had to extrapolate from this very condensed, CliffsNotes version we did and weave it into a more realized experience," Walker says. "Which is a fun experiment in form for us because usually we have a big fat piece and whittle it down, but now we have the entry and exit points and have to fill in the middle. So it's really an exercise in commedia [dell'arte]."

Another difference is the material. Rather than choosing songs from one artist, the soundtrack for *The Odd-Essy* is a hodgepodge, chosen by how well each one advances the story, whether it's "Under the Sea" when the Sirens make their entrance or "Chain of Fools" when another bad decision by Odysseus decimates even more of his crew. "It's all over the map, but they're great songs that people know, but they'll also help tell the story," Walker says. "And if we can hit the main points that help to make the tale more accessible to those who don't know it, that's always a bonus."

But don't fret, Shakespeare and artist-specific fans. Walker and company aren't done with the Bard yet. A few of the working titles yet to be explored include *King Elton John, The Merry Wives of Earth, Wind and Fire*; and, of course, *The Taming of the Who*.

THE ODD-ESSY

at Casa Romantica Cultural Center and Gardens, 415 Avenida Granada, San Clemente, (949) 498-2139, www.casaromantica.org. Thurs-Fri., June 6-7, 7 p.m. $25. For other Troubadaur Theater Co. events, visit www.troubas.com.

ARTSOVERLOAD

» AIMEE MURILLO

June 7-13

FLYING MIZ DAISY VINTAGE MARKET A curated vintage market featuring retro shabby chic, repurposed-goods vendors. Friday's event includes a Sip & Shop wine-tasting and live entertainment. Fri. 3-8 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. $7. The Hangar at OC Fair & Event Center, 88 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 708-1500, ocfair.com.

WAVES OF WELLNESS WEEKEND An indulgent weekend of fun, relaxing fitness experiences and seminars, including baby goat yoga, sunset photography, sound-bath meditation, facials and other spa sessions. Sat.-Sun., 9 a.m. Free, unless otherwise specified ($25-$125). Pasea Hotel & Spa, 21080 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, (855) 636-6371, paseahotel.com.

GROUND ZERO ANIMATION EXPO A two-day celebration of up-and-coming animation matters, with workshops, panels and portfolio reviews for young artists looking to get into the business. A vendor fair, an art show and arts and crafts are also included. Sat.-Sun., 10 a.m.-6 p.m. $10; panels and discussions, $15. The Boys and Girls Club of Stanton, 11050 Cedar St., Stanton, gzenxpo.com.

GOLDEN YEARS VINTAGE MARKET A small lot of vintage and retro-clothing vendors from throughout Southern California, as well as vinyl-record shopping and DJs. Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. Artists Village in Downtown Santa Ana, 207 N. Broadway, Santa Ana. www.facebook.com/goldenyearsmarket.

ORANGE COUNTY HISTORY ROUNDUP Costumed performers act as figures of Orange County's history and give tours and storytelling lectures. Live music, silhouette art and nature tours will also take place. Sat., 11 a.m. Free. Heritage Museum of Orange County, 3101 W. Harvard St., Santa Ana, (714) 540-0404, www.orangecountyhistory.org.

"EXHIBITION: ILLUSTRATIVE WORKS BY CURT MERLO AND STEPHANIE SNEE" Local illustrator Merlo and painter Snee display some of their most recent works. Opening reception, Sat., 8 p.m.; gallery open Mon.-Sat., 8 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun., 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Free. 1888 Center, 115 N. Orange St., Orange, (657) 282-0483, heritagefuture.org/1888-center.

BTS RECORD SHOW Stop by the Bust Swap Meet to check out a range of classic vinyl LPs, or sell your own. Sun., 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. 4th Street Market, 701 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 486-0700, bustswapmeet.com.

"HEDY TORRES" The artist examines various members of her community with individual black-and-white graphite portraits. Open Mon.-Thurs., 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., but call before visiting to confirm availability. Through Tues. Free. Buena Park City Hall Council Chamber, 6650 Beach Blvd., Buena Park, (714) 562-3560, www.buenapark.com.

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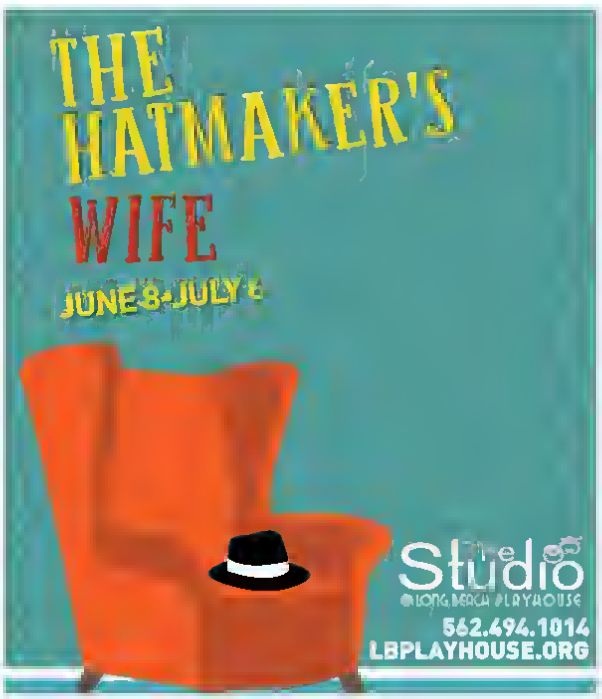
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The People's Festival

East End Block Party tries to level-up without selling out

BY NATE JACKSON

The sights, sounds and smells of 4th Street Market say a lot about the current state of downtown Santa Ana (DTSA). The hip, fast-paced food hall greets you with the flavor profiles of many cultures fusing into the huh that developer Ryan Chase has used to rebrand the area over the past four years. However, he has always hoped that music would be part of that equation.

Once a year, the area rises to the occasion with East End Block Party, a free event backed by Chase and spearheaded by Konsept collective founder Tyson Pruong, who works with a team of promoters, artistic collectives and DTSA businesses. The shape of it continues to grow and change with the neighborhood, Pruong says, gradually incorporating all styles and cultures while trying to retain a distinct feeling of Santa Ana.

"I think it's not just the festival growing; it's [also] us growing as individuals," he explains. "The more I've been working behind the scenes in the industry, the more promoting [I've done] and people I've met. These opportunities allowed me to contribute to the festival that's giving back to the community with the resources that I have."

That experience and teamwork shows in this year's ambitious lineup. Expanding to six stages, the fest added EDM and Spanish-speaking artists (on the Feels and Giant stages, respectively).

You can also expect hip-hop, R&B, punk, Latinx, and alt-rock acts on the East End Stage, the Feel Good Collective Stage, OCML Stage and the Chucotown Stage. Underground hip-hop's dark lord, Hopsin, will host a pop-up shop for his clothing brand Undercover Prodigy. Meanwhile, the new Link Market will be open to festival-goers shopping for street wear. And Artisans Trading Co. will sell pins and stickers on Fourth and Bush streets.

Last year, despite meeting an untimely end when a scare over an inert grenade forced police to clear the streets, the Block Party's crowd was the largest to date, attracting thousands of patrons. A mix of Santaneros and fans coming from as far as LA, Riverside and San Diego shows the magnetic pull of the festival as it has grown.

"The reality is that this was not a place people wanted to come to five or 10 years ago, for a lot of reasons. This festival helps open those doors and makes people aware of what's here," Chase says. "From an Orange County standpoint, there's not a cool urban center; [DTSA] is it. We don't have to go to LA to have that experience; we can do it here."

The organizers have also noticed the number of families coming to the event is steadily increasing. "Being a parent, seeing audiences with strollers and their family, it really changes the whole perspective and setting, and I love it," says production manager Daniel Park.

The collective vibe that kicked off with Konsept several years ago is strengthening as Third Street venues La Santa and the Yost Theater expand and begin to host more marquee Goldenvoice acts, drawing packed crowds to the area.

Expect some of that big-budget magic to surface at this year's Block Party, as a variety of surprise special guests are scheduled to perform. And after the main event, La Santa hosts an after-party featuring West Coast gangsta-rap legend Kurupt.

For Carlos "Droops" Cerda, a longtime DJ and promoter of hip-hop events in Santa Ana, using star-powered resources to throw a free event is his way of giving back to local fans. "I looked at it as a fan-appreciation show for supporting all the events we've been doing here in Santa Ana that do have a price tag on 'em," he says. "So to do something like that for the city and to bring everyone under one umbrella—we have different artists, different stages and whatnot—it's a little bit of something for everyone."

It's also a good look for local artists such as Jay Tay, Reverie, Vel the Wonder, DJ Lala and the Hurricanes, who have contributed to the event growth as performers, fans and promoters of the city in their own right.

"If it was all national acts—who gives a shit?" Chase says. "They're all doing their thing and making their money; they don't care about Santa Ana. The people who are here really give a shit, and some of the people who are coming are giving us really favorable terms just to come, just because they're from here and they're proud of Santa Ana getting some attention finally."

The festival comes at a time when the Santa Ana music scene is evolving, with venues such as the Observatory changing ownership, the revamp and expansion of La Santa swallowing up former restaurant Cevicheria Nais, and even whispers about plans to build a larger venue downtown. This year also marks the last hoorah for Konsept, as its core members pursue other opportunities. But Pruong says his commitment to the Block Party remains solid, and he hopes the event will be as big of a draw to the downtown community as 4th Street Market.

"I say this every year: I want to start planning the Block Party earlier and earlier," he says. "This year, we finally started planning six months out, but I really can't wait until we start one year out—just making sure it gets better every year."

NJACKSON@OCWEEKLY.COM

EAST END BLOCK PARTY

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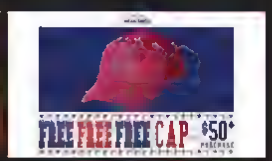

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All's Fair in Love and WARGIRL

The Long Beach band sharpen many styles into a positive voice

BY MORGAN EDWARDS

Tucked into the Long Beach backyard of Matt Wignall sits Tacky-land Studios, the rustic space where Cold War Kids recorded and collaborated for some of their earlier hits. The place is infused with the faint smell of palo santo wood, with eclectic art adorning the walls, but upon entering, you notice its energy is as vibrant and creative as its newest inhabitants, WARGIRL.

After years of producing and jamming with other bands, Wignall decided it was time to apply his well-developed skills to a new project. "I thought, 'Well, I sleep 20 feet from a music studio. Why haven't I done anything lately?'" he says.

He intended to gather together his musically inclined friends to create something as part of an "open-door collective," but after releasing an EP and getting airplay in Germany, they found themselves turning away more than 200 people during a European tour stop, as the line to get in wrapped the block. It was time to get serious.

Each band mate on the roster has an interesting day job. Bassist Tamara Raye is a mechanical engineer for Disney who also races motorcycles. Keyboardist Enya Preston is a graphic designer who occasionally works in a lab with drummer Jeff Suri, who has a Ph.D. in chemistry and has invented technology that helps people with chronic illnesses. Percussionist Erick Diego Nieto translates textbooks and documents for learning Spanish, while front woman Samantha Park is a jack of all trades who juggles yoga instruction, bartending and performing in a burlesque show. In addition to producing, Wignall is a photographer, and he owns a CBD oil company with his wife.

As most of the band has a connection to Long Beach, they feel the city cultivated their musical tastes. "There's a history of growing up here and listening to every type of music," Wignall says. "It was super-eclectic and weirder; unlike the jockey punk music, these were musicians from a scrappy working-class town."

Outside of a set genre, each band member contributes quirks from reggae, Afro-beat, Latin and hip-hop influences. "It's crazy how everyone's mind works so differently," says Park, "becoming something beautiful that no one has ever heard before."

Their diverse backgrounds give the band an extra breadth of originality. "Coming into this band felt organic from the jump," Park explains. The soulful jazz singer was the last to join after being discovered by Wignall through Instagram. "We're all seasoned artists who have experienced a lot of life and are all so loving and welcoming to one another."

Chalking it up to either luck or fate, the band members say they get chills thinking about all the pieces that came together for this opportunity to even happen.

For their self-titled LP, which was released in April, WARGIRL recorded in Costa Rica. Escaping to a different way of life helped in limiting the distractions that come with their day-to-day lives in the States. "We wanted to make an experience for ourselves so we could capture something musically that is really, honestly us, and hopefully, that translates when you listen to it," Wignall says.

The album has a spiritual feel with notes of '60s go-go funk, making it impossible to not shimmy along. And the lyrics cover not only personal matters, but also what's currently happening in our country.

"Musically, there's something for everyone—from punk to disco to reggae—on this record," Wignall says. "We're just trying to create something that is a positive voice in the world, and hopefully, people can see things flow naturally."

WARGIRL
perform with Furcast, Devil Season and Preloaded Spoon at Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com. Sat., 8 p.m. $8. 21+

COURTESY OF KID CONGO AND THE PINK MONKEY BIRDS

Friday

ALBOROSIE & SHENGEN CLAN, YELLOWMAN, K'REEMA 8 p.m., $17.50...all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600. www.observatorync.com.

MKTO 9 p.m. $25. all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600. www.observatorync.com.

MURDER BY DEATH, JONNY FRITZ. 9 p.m., $25. 21+. La Santa, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana. (657) 231-6005. www.lasantanc.com.

SEGA GENECIDE 9 p.m., $8. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039. www.wayfarercm.com.

Saturday

CJ RAMONE, MEAN JEANS, SPIDER. 9 p.m., $13. all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600. www.observatorync.com.

EAST END BLOCK PARTY. noon-10 p.m., free. all ages. Fourth Street, between Bush and French streets. Santa Ana, www.eastendblockparty.com

KURUPT OF THA DOGG POUND. 10:30 p.m., $20. 21+. La Santa, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana, (657) 231-6005. www.lasantanc.com.

THE LONELY ISLAND. 8 p.m., $50, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600. www.observatorync.com.

PUNK ROCK KARAOKE, UNIT F, MESA LANES. 8 p.m., $10. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039. www.wayfarercm.com.

SAM RIGGS AND THE NIGHT PEOPLE. 7 p.m., $12, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

SEBAOOH 8 p.m., $22.50. 21+. La Santa, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana. (657) 231-6005. www.lasantanc.com.

WAILING SOULS, THE ITALS 6 p.m., $20-$25, all ages. Garden Amp, 12762 Main St., Garden Grove. (949) 415-8544. gardenamp.com

WARGIRL, FURCAST, DEVIL SEASON, PRELOADED SPOON. 8 p.m., $8. 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com

Sunday

BABE RAINBOW; CLAUDE FONTAINE 9 p.m., $15, all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600. www.observatorync.com.

CHRIS TRAVIS. 10:30 p.m., $15. 21+. La Santa, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana. (657) 231-6005. www.lasantanc.com.

DABABY; STUNNA 4 VEGAS; BLACC ZACC. 8 p.m., $70-$75, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600. www.observatorync.com.

SADISTIK, TRIZZ, SAFAEL VIGILANTICS 9 p.m., $12, 21+. La Santa, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana. (657) 231-6005. www.lasantanc.com

Monday

JAKE TITTLE, SWAN POOL, DCR POLLOCK, WHAT ABOUT SYLVIA. 7:30 p.m., free. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039. www.wayfarercm.com.

Tuesday

THE MYSTERY LIGHTS; FUTURE PUNX 8 p.m., $12, all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600. www.observatorync.com.

Wednesday

BODIE, TAYLOR PHELAN. 9 p.m., $10. all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600. www.observatorync.com.

SHAPE PITAKI, FILMSPEED, 20 MINUTE MILE, NEW AMERICAN. 8 p.m., $5. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

KID CONGO & THE PINK MONKEY BIRDS; SLIM CESSNA'S AUTO CLUB, JAIL WEDDINGS: 9 p.m., $15, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

Thursday, June 13

BRANDON HOOGENBOOM, JOHN LOWELL ANDERSON, WES CHILLER 6:30 p.m., free, all ages. Garden Amp, 12762 Main St., Garden Grove, (949) 415-8544, gardenamp.com

DIANE COFFEE, CLAIRE GEORGE. 8 p.m., $15, all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600. www.observatorync.com.

THE LONGSHOT, THE DARTS, DEAD SOUND 8 p.m., $30, 21+. La Santa, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana. (657) 231-6005. www.lasantanc.com

POSSESSED BY PAUL JAMES, TOM VANDENAVOND, DENNIS ROBICHEAU 8 p.m., $10, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

THE PURCIE JONES REVUE; BIG RIG DOLLHOUSE 8 p.m., $8, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com

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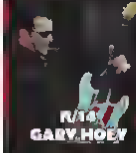

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Baby Soft

I'm a 27-year-old male, adult baby/diaper-lover (AB/DL). I've been in the closet about my fetish basically since puberty. As a consequence, I never dated or became romantically involved. I thought if I buried my kink with enough shame, it would go away and I would somehow turn normal. It obviously didn't work, and for the past year I've been trying to find healthy ways to integrate this into my life. I play around with the kink in the privacy of my home and otherwise lead a normal life. My depression issues have let up, I'm more confident day-to-day, and even work has begun to improve. I want to start dating. I want to be a normal dude, and I felt very inauthentic trying to be engaged when my kink wasn't present or at least out in the open. I just wasn't excited by the idea of a vanilla relationship. I would like to date women, but there's such an imbalance between men and women with this particular kink that I don't feel as if I'll ever meet someone who is compatible. I feel as though I'm doomed to be lonely forever with my kink or sexually unfulfilled and terrified of being found out.

Boy Alone Basically Eternally

"It's okay to not reveal every aspect of your sex life on a first date," said Lo, a kink-positive podcaster and AB/DL whose show explores all aspects of shared kink. "Besides, saying 'I like to wear diapers' on the first date is a surefire way to scare someone off. A better strategy is to establish a connection with a person, determine whether or not they're trustworthy, and *then* open up about AB/DL. That takes time."

Lo also doesn't think you should write off vanilla people as potential partners.

"BABE should know that it's possible to convert someone to the AB/DL side," said Lo. "I see it happen all the time. That's the focus of *Dreams Little*, my AB/DL podcast. Most of the people I feature are men who have turned their female partners on to AB/DL, so the odds are in your favor." Lo herself is happily partnered with a vanilla guy who embraced her kink.

That doesn't mean you're guaranteed success the first time you disclose your kink to a partner, BABE. But you'll never find someone with whom you're compatible—or with whom you can achieve compatibility—unless you're willing to risk opening up to someone.

"BABE is more likely to be doomed to the #forever-alone club if he gives up entirely out of fear," said Lo. "Being an AB/DL poses some unique challenges in the dating world, but thousands of other AB/DLs have found a way to make it work, and he can, too."

Now, before people start freaking out (and it may be too late)—it's not just AB/DLs who "convert" or "turn" vanilla partners to their kinks. There are two kinds of people at any big kink event (BDSM party, furry convention, piss splashdown): the people who were always kinky—i.e., people who've been aware of their kinks since puberty (and masturbating about them since puberty), and the people who fell in love with those people. So Lo isn't telling BABE to do anything that people with other kinks aren't advised to do: all the time, date, establish trust, then lay your kink cards on the table.

"BABE has come a long way, and it's great that he's building confidence. But he still views his kink as an impossible obstacle, and it doesn't need to be that way," said Lo. "It's so important that you learn how to accept your kink because then you will know you're capable of and deserving of love."

And finally, BABE, if and when you do meet a woman who is willing to indulge you—or maybe even embrace AB/DL play—don't neglect her sexual needs. I answered a letter years ago from a frustrated woman who was preparing to leave her AB/DL husband because he never wanted to have vanilla sex, and as much as she'd come to enjoy AB/DL occasionally, she no longer felt as if her needs mattered to her husband. Don't make the same mistake that guy did—or you could, after a long search for a compatible partner, find yourself miserable and alone again.

Follow Lo on Twitter and Instagram @daddywantsthis. Her podcast and AB/DL self-acceptance programs can be found at thelittleloungе.com.

SavageLove

» DAN SAVAGE

I need help deciding whether to listen to my mother on the matter of what's best for me romantically or to ask her to keep her opinion about my boyfriend to herself. My mom and I have always been close. She is a single parent, and I am an only child. I've always told her everything, and as I have gotten older, that has started to become a problem. I've been in a long-distance Daddy Dom/little girl relationship with a middle-aged man with spina bifida for three years. We met on FetLife right before I turned 19. The entire time, my mom has made fun of his disability while occasionally putting her pettiness aside and acknowledging that he's good to me. I made the mistake of telling her about the BDSM element, and she is extremely uncomfortable with it, though she denies that it is why she disapproves. My Daddy comes from a middle-class family and has been known to say insensitive shit on occasion about working-class people like my mom and me. I checked my Daddy on his privilege, and he doesn't say stupid shit about the jobs we work anymore. I love my Daddy and can't stand the idea of leaving him, but at times I wonder if my mom is right that me loving him isn't enough. He makes me feel loved and taken care of in a way no one else has before, but I worry about whether I can have a future with someone who doesn't work, whom my mom hates, and who might be a little bit of an asshole? (Do a couple of instances of rudeness make a man an asshole?) Help. I'm lost.

Dumb Daughter Loves Guy

Your entire relationship with your boyfriend—from the sound of things—has taken place online. Which is fine—people can forge strong connections online. But until you meet this man in person (assuming you haven't already), DDLG, and unless you're working toward moving to where he lives, this relationship probably won't last forever—which is also fine. A relationship doesn't have to last forever to have been a success. This guy played an important (and still ongoing) role in your sexual development and brought you a lot of joy — and you can acknowledge those things while simultaneously acknowledging the reality of the situation: The man you were with when you were 19 is probably not the man you'll be with when you're 28. That's true for most people, DDLG regardless of their kinks, distance from their lovers, relationships with their mothers, etc.

As for whether your boyfriend is an asshole — well, he certainly said some insensitive/assholey/classist things, DDLG, you let him know that wasn't okay, and he knocked it off. It's not proof he doesn't still think those things, but it *is* evidence he cares enough about you (or fears losing you enough) to stop saying those things. So even if he is an asshole, he is capable of moderating his assholery, which is something not all assholes can do.

As for your mom — just because you shared everything with her when you were a child doesn't mean you have to or should as an adult. There are things a mother has a right *not* to know, as my mother used to say, and her child's kinks fall under the "right not to know" header. When it comes to your romantic and sexual interests, DDLG, share the rough outlines with your mom ("I'm seeing this guy, it's long-distance, he's nice"), but spare her the intimate details (BDSM, DD/LG, whatever else).

On the Lovecast (savagelovecast.com), what do we do now that Tumblr is dead? Contact Dan via mail@savagelove.net, follow him on Twitter @fakedansavage, and visit ITMFA.org.

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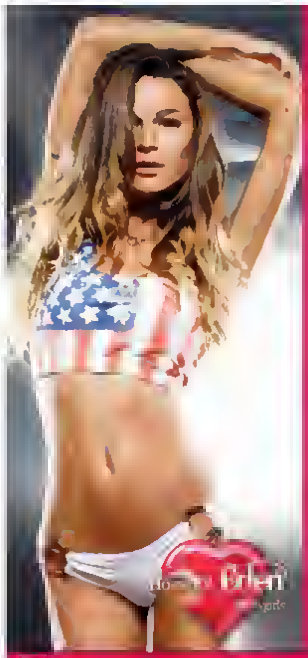

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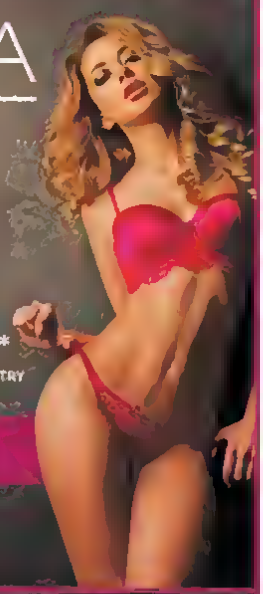

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TOKE OF THE WEEK

» JEFFERSON VANBILLIARD

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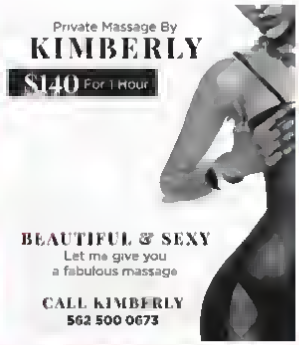
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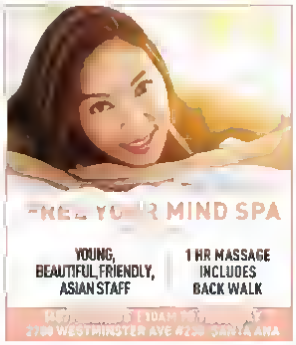
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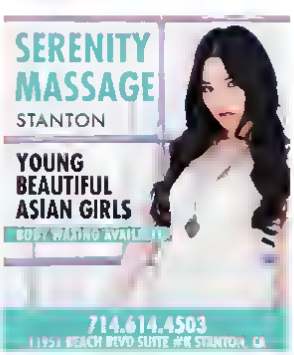
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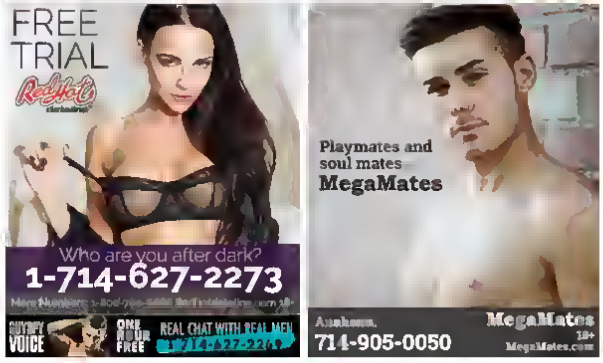
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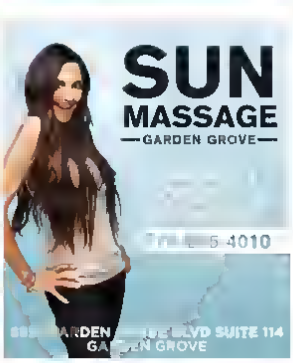
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BUILDING BRIDGES

Taco Trucks At Every Mosque made history on May 24 at the Islamic Society of Orange County as more than 1,600 people from the Muslim, Latino and Vietnamese communities gathered to fight hate, one halal taco and bowl of pho at a time.

The community initiative (also known as #TacoTrucksAtEveryMosque) founded by Rida Hamida and Ben Vazquez aims to bring together Muslim and Latino communities through food. Events have taken place throughout California, Mexico and Milwaukee. "We didn't just coexist; we got to know one another, and [we] learned what makes our community beautiful is our different cultures and how we connect," explains Hamida. "We held a space for one another to heal and embrace our identities."

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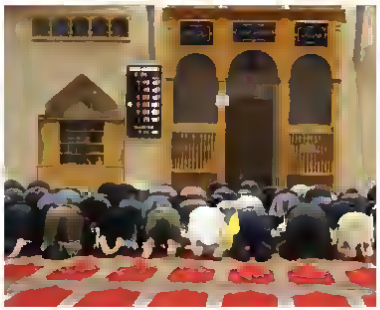

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